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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [MASS](#) [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [ML](#)
SUBJECT: MALI: REQUEST FOR 1206 EQUIPMENT

Classified By: Political Officer Aaron Sampson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1.(C) Embassy Bamako requests 1206 equipment to help fulfill key peace and security goals by enhancing Mali's ability to control its borders and counter threats posed by Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). This request is for communications equipment and trucks.

2.(C) Mali's status as one of west Africa's leading democracies, and AQIM's continued use of northern Mali as a safe haven, make Mali a key member of the Trans-Sahel Counter Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP). The Malian government is dedicated to eradicating AQIM from Malian soil but is unable to do so due in large part to severely limited resources. President Amadou Toumani Toure (ATT) has frequently reiterated his request, pending for nearly two years, for vehicles and communications equipment. In meetings with former Ambassador McCulley, former SOCEUR Commander Admiral McRaven, and AFRICOM Commander General Ward over the course of the last twelve months, he has remarked on his obligation to balance his commitment to fighting terrorism with his responsibilities to ensure the security of northern populations against the very real threat of retaliation. Outlining his strategy for northern security, ATT speaks first of reinforcing bases to a more distant perimeter to allow them to credibly defend themselves against attacks. He notes, too that vehicles and communications capacity are key to Mali's ability to maneuver in support of pursuing terrorists and interposing themselves to protect the safety of citizens in the north. Requested 1206 equipment directly addresses this resource problem, and with the prospect of equipment delivery speeded by arriving air assets in support of the Flintlock exercise, advances delivery of these long unfulfilled USG promises to our Malian partners.

3.(C) This request comes at a moment when the threat posed by AQIM appears to be growing. The brutal killing of Mauritanian troops by AQIM on September 15, the attackers' subsequent flight into northern Mali, and the recent arrest of suspected AQIM members in Malian city of Gao will likely force Mali to reassess the dangers posed by AQIM and Mali's strategy for combating them. The arrival of 1206 equipment serves a timely purpose, as it would occur at a moment when concern over AQIM's use of northern Mali is on the rise. The equipment provision to Mali would also send a clear signal to the Malian government regarding the need to increase pressure on AQIM in order to prevent future incidents in Mauritania, Algeria or potentially Mali.

LEONARD